(Revised)

PORTRAYAL OF OLD AGE IN THE SELECT BRITISH AND AMERICAN NOVELS: A GERONTOLOGICAL STUDY

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Introduction:

The term Gerontology stands for the scientific study of old age, the process of aging, and the particular problems of old people. The term Gerontology was coined by Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov in 1903 later this theory became widely popular. This specific term can be studied under the theoretical framework of Disability studies in the postmodern literature.

It is closely linked to biology, sociology, and psychology. It is the study of the aging processes and individuals as they grow from middle age through later life. It includes:

- The study of physical, mental, and social changes in older people as they age.
- The investigation of the changes in society resulting from our aging population.
- The application of this knowledge to policies and programs.

As a result of the multidisciplinary focus of gerontology, professionals from diverse fields call themselves "gerontologists".

The impact of aging in literature has been studied under various categories like comparative analysis of literary attitudes toward aging, humanistic approaches, and psychoanalytic explorations. Similarly, the enhanced interrogation of stories of age and aging via narrative approaches is found in the literature. The study of aging is increasingly recognized as a significant source of understanding the complexities of later life.

The literary representation of aging and old age concentrates upon literary portrayals of older people in literature. The topic is examined through key aspects like Social, Psychological and Philosophical. Fictional descriptions of aging can facilitate understanding of the aging process within a socio-psychological context. Moreover, stories about aging represent an invaluable cultural resource. In literature, we can find such portrayal of old Characters as they are dwelling in the memories, amnesia, fragmented self, and spirituality.

The artistic representations of older people have shaped our ideas about age and aging. Old age may be conceived of as 'Other' in youth-obsessed Western culture and it is directly reflected in the select novels.

LIFE AND WORKS:

1. **Kingsley William Amis (16 April 1922 – 22 October 1995):**

Kingsley William Amis was born on 16 April 1922 in Clapham south London. He is one the famous British novelist, poet, critic, and teacher. He wrote more than 20 novels, six volumes of poetry, a memoir, various short stories, and radio and television scripts, along with works of social and literary criticism. He was "the finest English comic novelist of the second half of the twentieth century." He was the father of British novelist Martin Amis.

He began his education at the City of London School, and went up to St. John's College, Oxford April 1941 to read English; it was there that he met Philip Larkin, with whom he formed the most important friendship of his life. After only a year, he was called up for Army service in July 1942. After serving in the Royal Corps of Signals in the Second World War, Amis returned to Oxford in October 1945 to complete his degree. Although he worked hard and got a first rank in English in 1947, he had by then decided to give much of his time to writing.

Awards:

- Kingsley Amis won the **Booker Prize** for his novel *The Old Devils*.
- A British daily national newspaper *The Times* ranked him ninth on a list of the 50 **Greatest British Writers** since 1945.
- **Somerset Maugham Award** for *Lucky Jim*, in 1983.
- **The Campbell Award** for the year's best science-fiction *The Alteration* in 1976.
- **The National Book League Award** and **National Book Critics Circle Award** for his literary contribution.

2. Julian Barnes (19 January 1946):

Julian Barnes was born in Leicester, England, on January 19, 1946. He was educated at the City of London School from 1957 to 1964 and at Magdalen College, Oxford, from which he graduated in modern languages (with honors) in 1968. Barnes maintains a high level of privacy with regard to his personal life, though he is often very candid in interviews. His brother, Jonathan Barnes, is a philosopher specializing in ancient philosophy.

Julian Barnes is a patron of human rights organization Freedom from Torture, for which he has sponsored several fundraising events, and Dignity in Dying, a campaign group for assisted dying.

He has received several awards and honors for his writing, including the **Man Booker Prize** for his novel **The Sense of an Ending in 2011.** *Flaubert's Parrot* 1984, *England, England* 1998, and *Arthur & George* 2005 these three novels were shortlisted for the **Man Booker Prize**. Barnes's other awards include the **Somerset Maugham Award** Metroland 1981, **Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize; Prix Medicis** 1986; **E. M. Forster Award** (American Academy and Institute of Arts and

Letters, 1986); **Gutenberg Prize** (1987); **Grinzane Cavour Prize** (Italy, 1988)

3. Deborah Moggach (28 June 1948):

Deborah Moggach was born as Deborah Hough in United Kingdom, England on 28th June 1948. She is a British novelist and Screenwriter. She graduated from the University of Bristol in 1971 with a degree in English, and worked as teacher at the Oxford University Press. She has two adult children: Tom, a teacher, and Lottie, a journalist and novelist. Moggach is a patron of *Dignity in Dying* and campaigns for a change in the law on assisted suicide.

She has written eighteen novels, including *The Ex-Wives*, *Tulip Fever* (made into the film of the same name), *These Foolish Things* (made into the film The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel) and *Heartbreak Hotel*. She re-married to a motorbike and movie journalist called Mark Williams and moved to his town in the Welsh Marches.

She began writing screenplays in the mid-eighties and like moving back and forth, between the interior world of the novel and the conflict-driven life of drama.

Art, illusion, doomed love and a tulip bulb are the themes of her first historical novel, "*Tulip Fever".*

In 2018 she was awarded the OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) and Queen's New Year's Honours List for her services to Literature and Drama in Powys, Wales.

4. Leonora Carrington (April 6, 1917–May 25, 2011):

She was born in Clayton Green, Lancashire, England, her father was wealthy textile merchant, and received much of her early education from tutors and nuns. She was best known as one of the leading female figures of the Surrealist movement. In 1937, Carrington met Max Ernst, who is

recognized as one of the pioneers of the Surrealist movement. Carrington and Ernst formed a strong bond, and lived in Paris and southern France where they supported each other's artistic talent and vision. This would result in their collaboration on several pieces of art that they used to decorate their home. In her work *Self-Portrait* (1938), Carrington offers her own interpretation of female sexuality by looking toward her own sexual reality rather than theorizing on the subject, as was custom by other Surrealists in the movement. She died on 25 May 2011, aged 94, in a hospital in Mexico City, as a result of complications arising from pneumonia.

In 1947, Carrington became extremely well known almost overnight after she showcased her work at a Surrealist exhibition held at the Pierre Matisse Gallery. As the only professional female painter represented at the exhibition, she quickly made a name for herself as one of the most prominent female painters of the Surrealist movement. In 2010, Carrington's work was presented during a show entitled Surreal Friends at the Pallant House Gallery in West Sussex. Before her death in 2011, Carrington was recognized as one of the last female painters of the Surrealist movement. She also gained recognition when her painting Juggler (1954) set a new record as the most expensive piece ever sold by a living Surrealist painter. Carrington died on May 25, 2011.

5. Philip Roth(March 19, 1933 – May 22, 2018):

Philip Roth was an American novelist and short-story writer. He was born in Newark, New Jersey, and grew up at 81 Summit Avenue in the Weequahic neighborhood. He was the second child of Bess and Herman Roth, an insurance broker. Roth's family was Jewish, and his parents were second-generation Americans.

Roth's work first appeared in print in the Chicago Review while he was studying, and later teaching, at the University of Chicago. His first

book, Goodbye, Columbus, contains the novella *Goodbye, Columbus* and four short stories. It won the **National Book Award** in 1960. He published his first full-length novel, *Letting Go,* in 1962. Much of Roth's fiction revolves around semi-autobiographical themes, while self-consciously and playfully addressing the perils of establishing connections between Roth and his fictional lives and voices.

He became one of the most awarded American writers of his generation. His books twice received **the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle award**, and three times the **PEN/Faulkner Award**. He received a **Pulitzer Prize** for his 1997 novel American Pastoral, which featured one of his best-known characters, Nathan Zuckerman, a character in many of Roth's novels. *The Human Stain* (2000), another Zuckerman novel, was awarded the **United Kingdom's WH Smith Literary Award** for the best book of the year. In 2001, in Prague, Roth received the inaugural **Franz Kafka Prize.**

6. John Hassler (March 30, 1933 – March 20, 2008):

John Hassler was an American writer and teacher known for his novels about small-town life in Minnesota. He was born in Minneapolis, but spent his formative years in the small Minnesota towns of Staples and Plainview, where he graduated from high school. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English from St. John's University in 1955. While teaching English at three different Minnesota high schools, he received his Master of Arts degree in English from the University of North Dakota in 1960.

It was in 1970, while teaching at Brainerd Community College, that John began to write fiction. In 1980 he became writer-in-residence at Saint John’s. He was later named Regent’s Professor. He remained until

his retirement in 1997. Throughout his career he remained dedicated to writing and teaching.

His Much of fiction involves characters struggling with transitions in their lives or searching for a central purpose. Many of his major characters are Catholic (or lapsed Catholics), and his novels frequently explore the role that small town life plays in shaping or limiting human potential.

7. **Ernest Hemingway (July 21, 1899 – July 2, 1961):**

Ernest Hemingway was an American journalist, novelist, short-story writer, and sportsman. He was born on July 21, 1899, in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. His father, Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, was a physician, and his mother, Grace Hall Hemingway, was a musician. From 1913 until 1917, Hemingway attended Oak Park and River Forest High School. He took part in a number of sports such as boxing, track and field, water polo, and football.

In 1921, Hemingway married four times. His family moved to Paris where he worked as a foreign correspondent and fell under the influence of the modernist writers and artists of the 1920s' "Lost Generation" expatriate community. His debut novel *The Sun Also Rises* was published in 1926. His economical and understated style which he termed the iceberg theory had a strong influence on 20th-century fiction, while his adventurous lifestyle and his public image brought him admiration from later generations. Hemingway produced most of his work between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s, The popularity of Hemingway's work depends on its themes of love, war, wilderness, and loss, all of which are strongly evident in the body of work.

He has received several awards for his writings, the Pulitzer Prize in fiction for *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), the Nobel Prize in

Literature in 1954, and American Academy of Arts and Letters Award of Merit (1954)

8. Paul Harding (born 1967):

He is an American musician and author. He grew up on the north shore of Boston in the town of Wenham, Massachusetts. As a youth he has spent a lot of time "knocking about in the woods," which he attributes to his love of nature. His grandfather fixed clocks and he apprenticed under him, an experience that found its way into his novel *Tinkers*. Harding has a B.A in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. After graduating from the University of Massachusetts, he spent some time touring with his band Cold Water Flat in the US and Europe.

He had always been a heavy reader and recalls reading Carlos Fuentes Terra Nosta and thinking "this is what I want to do". He was "deeply" influenced by Karl Barth and John Calvin. He considers himself a self-taught modern New England transcendentalist.

He is best known for his debut novel *Tinkers* (2009), which won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2010 PEN/Robert Bingham Prize among other honors. In 2012 he won Fernanda Pivano Award.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE:

The term Gerontology or Aging in literature is not much popular however in the late twentieth century, a few research scholars have written and published some articles and reviews in *International Journal of Ageing and Later Life and* blogs on aging in literature but no serious critical work has been produced yet.

The present research is a pioneering work in aging in literature. This academic research will add a new dimension to the corpus of Gerontology.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

i) To highlight different aspects associated with aging in select novels.

ii) To study how the aging affects Identity, Memory and Relationships in the selected novels

iii) To study the multifaceted Psychological, Spiritual, Philosophical and Social aspects of the Old age Characters.

HYPOTHESIS:

The present study tries to focus on the writer's perspectives on the old age, memory, relationship, spirituality, death etc, and Gerontological aspects and portrayals reflected in the select novels. The researcher has assumed that the concept of old age differs in the psychosocial and cultural contexts.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The proposed research work is confined to only seven novels of British and American authors.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF NOVELS:

a. The novels specifically deal with the problems about aging.
b. All the selected novels cover a wide range of time and place.
c. The selected novels under study have the old characters and various aspects of the aging literature. I.e. psychosocial, amnesia, relationships, identity etc.
d. The writer takes positive or negative views on aging in the selected works.

LIST OF SELECTED NOVELS FOR THE STUDY:

British novels:

i) Ending up(1974) *Kingsley Amis*
ii) The Sense of an Ending(2011) *Julian Barnes*

iii) These Foolish Things (2004)*Deborah Moggach*

iv) The Hearing Trumpet (1974) *Leonora Carrington*

American novels:

v) Everyman (2006)*Philip Roth*

vi) Simon's Night(1997)*John Hassler*

vii) The Old Man and the Sea (1952) *Ernest Hemingway*

viii) Tinker**s** (2009)*Paul Harding*

i. Ending up (1974)

Ending Up is a novel written by British novelist Kingsley Amis. The novel was originally published in 1974. This novel is about five old-timers approaching death in England. It is a startlingly funny work, considering the grim subject. The bulk of the novel, with the exception of a few doctors' visits takes place at Tuppeny-Happenny Cottage, where the novel's five protagonists share residence. The cottage, with its off-the-beaten-path culture, is a petri dish of incubating irritation resulting from the character's declining physical power and loss of mental faculties.

While the plot is inherently tragic, Amis' dry descriptions, annoying characters, and ridiculous ending argue for the book's classification as comedy.

The cast consists of individuals whose personalities are equal in flaw to their failing physicality. Amis adorns the plot with their elderly idiosyncrasies, their peeves, their insecurities, and their coping to fill their dwindling time above ground. The novel has emphasized on psychological and physical issues of old characters.

ii. The Sense of an Ending(2011)

The Sense of an Ending is written by British author Julian Barnes. The novel is divided into two parts, entitled "One" and "Two", both of which are narrated by Tony Webster when he is retired and living alone. Tony recalls how he and his clique met Adrian Finn at school and vowed to remain friends for life. When the past catches up with Tony, he reflects on the paths he and his friends have taken.

In October 2011, the novel was awarded the Man Booker Prize.

iii. These Foolish Things (2004)

These Foolish Things is a novel by British novelist and a screenwriter Deborah Moggach. The novel was published in 2004.

The novel depicts older British characters who decide to share their last years when they realize that they are increasingly forgotten and invisible both within their communities and their families. The novel tells us about Dr.Ravi Kapoor who built a retirement home that is set up in India for those living in Britain. Instead of willing away the rest of their years in some dreary place in the UK, instead they could be enjoying the best that India has to offer and for a fraction of the cost.

The story follows a few different characters and their different perspectives on the place. Throughout the novel Moggach has set up a different way of thinking about what's called "old age" and the way older people are treated in Britain, and in some sense in America and the Western world, compared to developing countries is rather sinful, because we bundle people into residential care.

iv. The Hearing Trumpet (1974)

The Hearing Trumpet is a novel written by Leonora Carrington. The novel was published in 1974. The novel depicts the story of 92-year-old Marian Leatherby, who is given the gift of a hearing trumpet only to discover that what her family is saying is that she is to be committed to an institution. But this is an institution where the buildings are shaped like birthday cakes and igloos, where the Winking Abbess and the Queen Bee reign, and where the gateway to the underworld is open. It is also the scene of a mysterious murder. The novel also deals with an aging and the female body. It criticizes the shaming of the nude female body, and it is believed to be one of the first books to tackle the notion of gender identity in the twenty-first century.

v. Everyman (2006)

Everyman by Philip Roth was published in May 2006. This novel deals with the universal story of loss, regret, and stoicism. The plot centers on the larger story about the facts of illness and dying that sooner or later must be faced by all. It is a testament to Roth's seemingly inexhaustible creative powers that he invests this story of illness and death with all the vibrancy.

vi. Simon's Night(1997)

Simon's Night is written by John Hassler and published in 1997. This novel tells us about the Seventy-six-year-old character Simon Shea, a retired professor of English Literature at a small Minnesota college. The novel focuses on Gerontological aspect of memory.
He has begun forgetting things. He forgets his car in town forgets to turn off the gas stove and nearly burns down his house. Therefore, he commits himself to a private rest home.

All the events of the novel take place in one week with several flashbacks to earlier events.

vii. The Old man and the Sea (1952)

The Old Man and the Sea is a short novel written by the American author Ernest Hemingway, and published in 1952. It tells the story of an old man named Santiago, a Cuban fisherman who struggles with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream off the coast of Cuba. The routines of life in a Cuban fishing village are evoked in the opening pages of the novel. The novel has Gerontological aspects like psychological, Socio-cultural and spiritual.

viii. Tinkers (2009)

Tinkers (2009) is the first novel by the American author, Paul Harding. The novel was first published in 2009. The novel tells the stories of George Washington Crosby, an elderly clock repairman, and his father, Howard. On his deathbed, George remembers his father, who was a tinker selling household goods from a donkey-drawn cart and who struggled with epilepsy. The novel has won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and other awards and honors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The proposed study is based on the close reading of the Primary and secondary sources. The investigator intends to study the novels by analytical, interpretative and evaluative methods.

The researcher intends to apply the theoretical framework of Gerontology and psychological perspectives.

Original books, reference books, dictionaries, and internet will be used to collect primary and secondary data.

THE CHAPTER SCHEME:

Chapter I:	i) Introduction.
	ii) Life and works.
	iii) Review of relevant literature.
	iv) Objectives of the study.
	v) Hypothesis.
	vi) Scope and limitation of the study.
	viii) Criteria for the selection of novels.
	ix) List of Selected novels under study.
	x) Research methodology.
Chapter II:	A Theoretical Framework of the study.
Chapter III:	Analysis of the British novels.
Chapter IV:	Analysis of the American novels.
Chapter V:	Conclusion.

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